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Message Text

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41
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 AID-05 OMB-01 DHA-02 NEA-10 OPR-02 SY-05

TRSE-00 /101 W
---------- 025796
P 191329Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8223
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS PINT ET
SUBJECT: PATRIARCH OF ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH DEPOSED

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2006 (DTG 181510Z FEB 76)

1. ETHIOPIAN RADIO OF FEB 18 AND PRESS OF FEB 19
CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ABUNA TEWOFLOS, PATRIARCH OF THE
ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH HAS BEEN DEPOSED. WE ASSUME
FBIS WILL CARRY TEXT, BUT SALIENT POINTS FOLLOW: ABUNA
TEWOFLOS WAS CHARGED WITH FAILURE TO PROTEST THE ATROCITIES
AND INJUSTICES OF THE FORMER FEUDAL REGIME; AMASSING
PERSONAL WEALTH WHICH HE REFUSED TO USE TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING
OF WOLLO DROUGHT VICTUMS; SELLING HISTORICAL RELICS TO
FOREIGNERS; APPOINTING THREE BISHOPS WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORITY,
AND BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDER OF A NUMBER OF
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CLERGYMEN OPPOSED TO HIM. HE ALSO ILLEGALLY GAVE

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HOLY COMMUNION IN CHURCHES IN AMERICA WHILE ON A VISIT
THERE.

2. ACCORDING TO EPMG STATEMENT, THE INTERNAL REVENUE
DEPARTMENT HAS SUED HIM FOR ETH $494,114 IN TAX ARREARS
AND THAT, TO AVOID TAX PAYMENTS, THE ABUNA HAD DEPOSITED
MORE THAN ETH $4 MILLION IN 20 DIFFERENT BANK ACCOUNTS
UNDER VARIOUS PSEUDONYMS. HE IS ALSO ACCUSED OF TRAVELING
TO FIVE CONTINENTS FOR PERSONAL PLEASURE RATHER THAN ON
CHURCH BUSINESS. STATEMENT ASSERTS THAT THE ABUNA WAS
MADE PATRIARCH THROUGH ELECTORAL MANIPULATION ENGINEERED
BY EX-EMPEROR AND FORMER ARISTOCRACY AND THAT HIS
LOYALTY WAS ONLY TO THE PERSON WHO APPOINTED HIM RATHER
THAN TO THE FAITHFUL.

3. ACCORDING TO EPMG STATEMENT, ABUNA YOHANES IS NOW THE
ACTING PATRIARCH UNTIL ELECTION OF A SUCCESSOR TO TEWOFLOS,
WHICH IS TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE JULY 7, 1976. AN AD HOC
COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
AND MEASURES FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD PENDING NEW
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS FOR THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH.

4. EMBASSY HAS SEVERAL REPORTS THAT ABUNA AND SEVERAL
OTHER PERSONS CONNECTED WITH HIM HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

5. COMMENTS BY SEPTEL.
HUMMEL

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